

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3-6 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the features previously recited in claim 2. Claims 2, 7 and 8 have been canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter filed therein. To address the objection to the drawings and the specification, the specification and the Abstract have been amended. No new matter has been added.

I. Objection to the Drawings

On page 3 of the Office Action, the drawings were objected to because Fig. 2 allegedly was missing.

In response to the drawing objection, Applicant has amended the specification to indicate that Fig. 2 is a plan view of the mounting base as the Examiner kindly pointed out.

II. Objection to the Specification

On page 3 of the Office Action, the specification was objected to because allegedly the Abstract contained redundant language.

In response to the objection to the specification, the Abstract has been amended. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

III. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,203,136 to Takahashi et al. (Takahashi). The rejection of claim 2 is moot in view of the cancellation of claim 2. The rejection is respectfully traversed with respect to claims 1, and 3-6.

As amended to incorporate the claim 2 features, claim 1, calls for among other features "the corners are more elastically deformable than other portions of the ring-like lip,

and the corners are made thinner than the other portion." Takahashi fails to disclose or suggest the feature.

Takahashi allegedly provides a solution that addresses two problems. The first problem is that, if the curvature radius $R1$ of the corner portion 35a of the cap 34 is made as small as possible to thereby increase the rate of the occupation of the straight portion 35b as shown in FIG. 7(d), the rigidity of the corner portion 35a becomes so large that the sealing performance with the nozzle plate P in this region is reduced.

The second problem is that, if the curvature radius $R2$ of the corner portion 35a of the draping 35 of the cap 34 is made large enough to form a half-circle with the other adjacent corner portion 35a so as to eliminate a straight portion as shown in FIG. 7(e), the rigidity of the corner portion 35a is so reduced that the sealing performance is reduced.

Takahashi allegedly solves these problems by making the center portion in the longitudinal direction (the region shown by line A--A in FIG. 7(a); FIG. 7(b)) a little thicker than the neighborhood of the corner portion 35a (the region shown by line B--B in FIG. 7(a); FIG. 7(c)) as shown in FIGS. 7(b) and 7(c). Therefore, allegedly settling caused by the buckling of the center portion at the time of contacting with the nozzle plate can be prevented so that the center portion can contact with the nozzle plate uniformly.

That is, Takahashi only makes the center portion in the longitudinal direction thicker. In other words, the other portions (i.e., the end portions in the longitudinal direction and the straight portion (short side) 35b) of Takahashi have the same uniform thickness. Thus, Takahashi fails to teach or suggest the feature wherein the corners are made thinner than the other portion as recited in amended claim 1.

Another difference between claim 1 and Takahashi is that the corners are more elastically deformable than the other portions of the ring-like lip as recited in the claim 1. In contrast, Takahashi does not disclose such feature. As discussed above, Takahashi makes

only the center portion in the longitudinal direction thicker so as to prevent settling caused by the buckling of the center portion when contact is made with the nozzle plate.

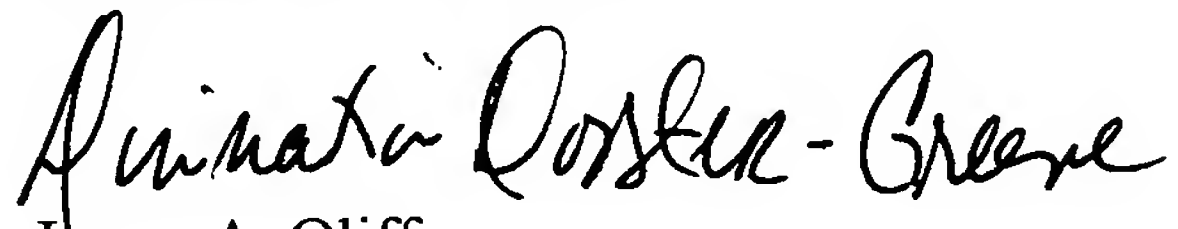
Accordingly, Takahashi does not suggest claim 1 or dependent claims 3-6, which include additional features.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1 and 3-6 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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